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AD NUMBER
AD859307
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TRANSFORMATION OF PASTEURELLA NOVICIDA

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William D. Lawton

AUGUST 1969

SEP 26 1969

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
Fort Detrick
Frederick, Maryland

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AD 8559307

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TRANSFORMATION OF PASTEURELLA NOVICIDA

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Project 1B061102B71A

August 1969

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We thank John D. Boyer for excellent technical assistance.

ABSTRACT

Deoxyribonucleic acid from a streptomycin-resistant mutant of Pasteurella novicida transformed portions of streptomycin-sensitive P. novicida populations to streptomycin resistance. Similarly, mutants auxotrophic for tryptophan or purine biosynthesis were also transformed to nutritional independence.

TRANSFORMATION OF PASTEURELLA NOVICIDA*

Genetic exchange by transformation has been demonstrated for a number of bacteria, but such a process has not been reported for any members of the genus Pasteurella. This report describes gene transfer in Pasteurella novicida employing "plate transformation."¹

The wild-type strain P. novicida U112 was obtained from LTC John Marshall, U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. A spontaneous streptomycin-resistant mutant (NM-1, Sm^r) was obtained from glucose cysteine blood agar (GCBA)² plates containing 1 mg streptomycin sulfate per ml. Mutants auxotrophic for tryptophan (NM-15, Trp) and purine (NM-38, Pur) were obtained after exposure of wild-type cells to N-methyl-N'-nitro-N-nitrosoguanidine (NTG), employing modifications of the method of Altenbern.³ After treatment of cells with 100 µg NTG/ml, mutants were selected for growth on the defined medium of Chamberlain⁴ supplemented with additional amino acids, purines, and pyrimidines for which nutritional dependence was desired, and on unsupplemented defined medium. All cultures were maintained on GCBA slants.

DNA was extracted from P. novicida by the method of Marmur.⁵ DNA concentrations were determined by the method of Burton.⁶

Transformations of P. novicida from Sm^s to Sm^r were performed essentially as described by Bøvre for Moraxella.⁷ Recipient cells were grown overnight at 37 C on a GCBA plate. The growth was removed with 2 ml of gel-saline⁸ and diluted to approximately 1×10^{10} cells/ml, and 0.1 ml of the cell suspension was mixed with 0.1 ml of NM-1 DNA on GCBA plates (25 ml of medium per plate). The plates were incubated at 37 C and, at hourly intervals, the agar from each plate was transferred to a large petri dish containing 50 ml of GCBA + 1.5 mg streptomycin sulfate per ml. Incubation was continued at 37 C and Sm^r transformants were scored after 48 hours. Control plates contained cells alone, cells + NM-1 DNA + deoxyribonuclease (100 µg), or cells + wild-type DNA.

Transformations of auxotrophic mutants were performed by spreading 0.1 ml of recipient cells, prepared as described above, plus wild-type or NM-1 DNA, on Chamberlain's agar plates.

Table 1 shows that when Sm^s cells were incubated in the presence of NM-1 DNA, streptomycin-resistant colonies were produced. That these colonies resulted from DNA-mediated transformation was indicated by the following: (i) very few colonies were produced in the absence of NM-1 DNA; (ii) deoxyribonuclease obliterated the production of virtually all Sm^r colonies; and (iii) only a few spontaneous revertants appeared when the Sm^r recipients were plated in the presence of wild-type DNA.

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TABLE 1. TRANSFORMATION OF WILD-TYPE PASTEURELLA NOVICIDA
ON AGAR PLATES

Exp. No.	Cells per Plate	DNA		Deoxyribo- nuclease, μg/plate	Sm ^r Colonies per Plate ^a /
		Source	μg/Plate		
1	1.0 x 10 ⁹	NM-1	108	0	>1,000
			0	0	11
2	6.5 x 10 ⁸	NM-1	108	100	2
			0	0	3
			108	0	300
3	2.6 x 10 ⁸	NM-1	108	0	175
			0	0	2
		Wild-type	62	0	1

a. For each experiment, the cells and DNA were incubated on GCBA plates for 3 hours at 37 C before contact with streptomycin.

Further evidence for DNA-mediated marker transfer is presented in Table 2. Transformants for Trp⁺ or Pur⁺ were produced only in the presence of wild-type DNA, and the number of transformants obtained was dependent on the amount of wild-type DNA used.

Because of the inherent limitations of the "plate transformation"¹¹ technique, we have been unable thus far to obtain quantitative data for conditions of competence, uptake of DNA, and phenotypic expression (Sm^r). Experiments designed to obtain such data by transforming cells in a liquid medium are currently in progress.

P. novicida is closely related to Pasteurella tularensis by gross appearance of cultures, microscopic appearance, pathogenicity,⁹ and DNA hybridizations.¹⁰ However, differences in serological reactions and metabolism support a separate species designation.^{9,11} We anticipate that future studies on transformation between P. tularensis and P. novicida will aid in their taxonomic placement.

TABLE 2. TRANSFORMATION OF PASTEURELLA NOVICIDA AUXOTROPHIC MUTANTS^{a/}

Exp. No.	Recipient Strain	Cells per Plate	Source	DNA		Deoxyribo-nuclease, $\mu\text{g}/\text{plate}$	Transformants per Plate
				$\mu\text{g}/\text{Plate}$	$\mu\text{g}/\text{Plate}$		
1	NM-15	8.4×10^8	NM-1	108	0		Trp ⁺ >1,000
				108	100		0
				62	0		>1,000
				31	0		>1,000
2	NM-15	1.4×10^9	Wild-type	62	100		0
				30	0		0
				10.8	0		>1,000 to <2,000
				1.1	0		153
3	NM-38	6.0×10^7	NM-1	0.1	0		17
				0.01	0		5
						Pur ⁺	
				10.8	0		>1,000
				1.1	0		>1,000
				10.8	100		0

a. Control plates without DNA produced no colonies.

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Unclassified

Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D		
(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)		
1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author) Department of the Army Fort Detrick, Frederick, Maryland, 21701		2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified
		2b. GROUP
3. REPORT TITLE TRANSFORMATION OF <u>PASTEURELLA NOVICIDA</u>		
4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)		
5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name) Franklin J. Tyeryar, Jr. William D. Lawton		
6. REPORT DATE August 1969	7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 11	7b. NO. OF REFS 11
8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO.	8b. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) Technical Manuscript 549	
8c. PROJECT NO. 1B061102B71A		
9.	2b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	
4.	CMA 6569	
10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT Qualified requesters may obtain copies of this publication from DDC. Foreign announcement and dissemination of this publication by DDC is not authorized. Release or announcement to the public is not authorized.		
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES	12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY Department of the Army Fort Detrick, Frederick, Maryland, 21701	
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14. Key Words <u>Pasteurella novicida</u> Gene transfer Transformation Deoxyribonucleic acid Streptomycin resistance Auxotrophic mutants		

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